Mr. *FLEETWOOD's*

SERMON

BEFORE THE

Lord-Mayor, &c.

JAN. 30. 169⅞

Child Mayor.

Jovis nono die Februarii, 1698.
Annoq; Reg' Regis Willi.
Tertii Angliæ, &c. decimo.

THIS Court doth desire Mr. *Fleetwood* to Print his Sermon Preach'd at the Cathedral Church of St. *Paul*, the Thirtieth of *January* last, before the Lord-Mayor, Aldermen, and Citizens of this City.

Goodfellow.

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E.11.64

A

SERMON

PREACH'D at

St. *PAUL*'s Cathedral,

JANUARY 30. $169\frac{8}{9}$.

Before the

Right Honourable

THE

LORD MAYOR,

AND

Court of Aldermen,

By *W. FLEETWOOD*,
Chaplain in Ordinary to His Majesty.

LONDON,
Printed for *Thomas Newborough*, at the *Golden-Ball* in St. *Paul*'s Church-Yard, 169$\frac{1}{9}$.

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1049 : 90

LONDON,

Printed for Thomas Newborough, at the Golden Ball in St. Paul's Church Yard, 165⅝.

1 Sam. xxvi. 10, 11.

David said furthermore, as the Lord liveth, the Lord shall smite him, or his day shall come to dye, or he shall descend into Battel and perish. The Lord forbid that I should stretch forth mine hand against the Lord's anointed.

THO' one must needs be sensible, that Arguments and Inferences fetch'd from the *Jewish* Government, cannot by any means conclude with Certainty, another Nation and a different Constitution; and that the Scripture-Instances themselves, without some general positive Command to follow them, can oblige no farther than they carry Reason and Convenience along with them; yet because the World is govern'd mostly by Examples and Scripture-Examples, chiefly urg'd and fittest for our Imitation, it may not be improper to consider, in this History, the Provocations *Saul* had given to *David*, and the Opportunities

nities that *David* had to avenge himſelf, and take away his Life: This I will do in the *firſt place*; and in the *ſecond*, conſider the Reaſon *David* here aſſigns for his Proceedings; *It is the Lord's anointed*: And in the *third* and *laſt place*, apply my ſelf a little to the Occaſion of this Day's Aſſembly.

I. The Perſons here concern'd are *Saul* and *David*, the King of *Iſrael* and his Servant, the Father and the Son-in-law; and the State in which the Text ſhews us theſe two, was that of *Enmity*; it was the ſecond time that *Saul*, with a premeditated form'd Deſign had hunted after *David* to deſtroy him; and 'twas the ſecond time that God had put the former in the latter's Power, and given his Life into his Hands, which he was tender of the ſecond time, and ſpar'd it with his old and uſual good Expreſſion, *God forbid that I ſhould ſtretch forth my hand againſt the Lord's anointed*; a noble Inſtance this, if 'twere alone, of a moſt excellent forgiving Nature, of firm and ſolid Virtue, of ſteady and unſhaken Loyalty; but when conſider'd with its Circumſtances that attended it, the Provocations *Saul* had given, and the Advantages that *David* had, it will appear an Act ſo brave and generous, that it would be flattering up our ſelves in vain, to hope to ſee it ever parallel'd throughout.

Conſider therefore *firſt*, the Prince that was his Captive now, and at his Mercy had ſomewhile ſince deſcended ſo below himſelf, as to become the Envier and Detractor from his Praiſe, was poorly jealous of the Honours he had purchaſed, and tried to blaſt the Laurels he had gather'd, at the expence of ſo much painful Toil and Hazard; and 'tis no

little

little ſhare of Grace and Goodneſs, that can reſtrain a young aſpiring Hero, from taking Vengeance on the Maligners of his Praiſe, and from removing all Impediments in his purſuit of Fame and Glory.

Conſider, *Secondly*, This was the Prince that had attempted twice to murther him himſelf, had thrown his Javelin twice to fix him to the Wall, and choſe to make himſelf the Executioner of his own Choler and Revenge, hearkening ungratefully to the Suggeſtions of that *Evil Spirit*, which the good Youth was at the preſent labouring with his Muſick to appeaſe and charm; and when Mens Lives are ſo apparently ſought after, they uſually lay all Reſpects aſide, and liſten to the Dictates of unruly Nature.

Thirdly, He was a falſe perfidious Prince, under pretence of honouring and advancing him, he had remov'd him from himſelf, and made him Captain over a Thouſand; and ſtill to make the Matter leſs ſuſpicious, ſaid unto him, *Behold my elder Daughter* Merab, *her will I give to thee for Wife, only be valiant for me, and fight the Lord's Battels.* But what follows? *For* Saul *ſaid, let not mine hand be on him, but let the hand of the* Philiſtines. Nothing affects a generous Mind ſo ſenſibly, as being cheated under ſhew of Friendſhip; and Treachery is never viler, than when 'tis covered with the Mask of Godlineſs.

But, after all, *it came to paſs, at the time when* Merab, Saul's *Daughter, ſhould have been given to* David, *that ſhe was given to* Adriel *the* Meholathite *to Wife*; an affront in its own Nature very great undoubtedly; but ſuch as, according to the Maxims of our modern

modern Gallantry were never to be pardoned. But worſer yet; When *Michol*'s voluntary Love had amply ſatisfied the diſappointment he had had in *Merab*, the unrighteous Father, harden'd in his Cruelty, would make his Daughter inſtrumental in the murthering of his Son-in-law, would have the Left-hand cut the Right one off, the Wife conſpire againſt her Lord and Husband, and betray the Life ſhe lov'd and priz'd above her own. And when a Man has thus apparently attempted to debauch the Loyalty, and break the Union of the Marriage-Bed, to diſſolve thoſe Sacred Bands, to interrupt the ſweeteſt Commerce of Man's Life, and violate all the ties of Nature, Reaſon, and Religion, by a practice of ſuch horrid and unnatural Wickedneſs, there is hardly any exceſs of Fury ſo exorbitant, but ſeems at firſt excuſable, in a thus injured and abuſed Husband. *But God forbid*, ſaid *David*, notwithſtanding all this, *that I ſhould ſtretch my hand againſt the Lord's anointed.* The Villany of this Attempt, the Wickedneſs of *Saul*, and *David*'s Vertue, might yet be raiſed, by conſidering what were the effects of this his Rage and Diſappointment; he was ſo cruel that he took the Princeſs from her Husband, broke off the comfort of her Life, and ſent her to a Strangers loath'd unhallow'd Bed; and even when *Jonathan* himſelf, his nobleſt beſt beloved Son, the prop and comfort of his Age, the light and joy of *Iſrael*, the glory of his Houſe, and the ſupport of his Kingdom, came but to intercede in his Friend's behalf, and to excuſe his Abſence, *Saul*'s Anger was ſo enkindled at him, that he caſt a Javelin at him, to have nail'd him to the Wall;

a piece of Rage and brutal Violence that Nature wants a name for, but a ſure Indication, that ſuch a ſettled Wrath was never to be appeaſed, and therefore never to be ventured more, and therefore now ſecur'd for ever.

But *farther*, he was Perjur'd, He had but lately taken a ſolemn Oath before the Lord and *Jonathan*, *David* ſhould not be Slain; when behold, upon the firſt awakening of his Evil Spirit, even whilſt his Vows were warm upon his Lips, he threw himſelf the ſecond Javelin at his Heart, and threw away all Faith and Honour with it. And when a Prince hath thus abandon'd common Honeſty, broken the ſacred Cords that knit Societies, and keep up Governments and mutual Correſpondences, together with Relations Natural and Civil, and by his Perjuries, provok'd the Vengeance of God, and is delivered into the Hands of thoſe whoſe Innocence and good Credulity he had impos'd on, and abus'd almoſt to their Deſtruction, Oh! what a mighty meaſure of God's Grace muſt fill the Heart of him, that then could ſay, *The Lord forbid that I ſhould ſtretch forth my hand againſt the Lord's anointed.*

There are ſome things beſides our Lives and Perſons, in which if we are touch'd, we think our ſelves extreamly Injur'd; and they are ſpecially our *Friends*, our *Fortunes* and *Religion*; and *David* was in every one of theſe affected more or leſs by *Saul*'s implacable purſuit, and hunting after him. He was conſtrain'd to change his Habitation, carry his Father and his Mother, and his whole Family, into a ſtrange Country, aged and feeble, as they needs muſt be. To be forc'd, when one is growing old,

and ſtooping with Infirmities, to forſake ones Native Place, the Dwelling of ones Anceſtors, the Comforts of good Neighbourhood, the uſual Proſpects and familiar Objects of ones Sight, with all the old Conveniencies of Life, in the way one is in, for a ſtrange Country, barbarous Neighbours, new Laws and Uſages, and Tongue unknown, muſt needs be hard and troubleſome to humane Nature, and an Oppreſſion ſcarce to be endur'd: Yet this was *David*'s Caſe, who felt theſe Evils in himſelf, but much more ſenſibly in the Diſtreſſes of his Parents, who, by the fury of the King, were driven *to* Miſpeh, *of the King of* Moab.

And then for his *Eſtate*, it could not otherwiſe be but he muſt ſuffer much in that reſpect, it was impoſſible to remove his whole Effects: King's have long Hands, and piercing Eyes, and by their Officers can reach and ſee at mighty diſtance: And *Saul* had *Harpies* in his Court undoubtedly, as well as other Kings, ready to beg and ſeize upon the Eſtates of ſuch as by their Crimes or their Misfortunes, were obnoxious to the King's Diſpleaſure.

Laſtly, for his *Religion*, Although he ſuffer'd nothing *for* or *by* it, yet much he ſuffer'd for the want of it; to be driven away into a wicked and idolatrous Country, and be debarr'd the exerciſe of his Religion, to be hurried from God's Temple, and the communicating in the appointed daily Service of that Holy Place, was little leſs than painful Martyrdom to one ſo zealouſly and ſo devoutly bent, as *David* was.

Let

Let any Man recount the Evils I have mention'd, ſumm up the Perſecutions and the Provocations of King *Saul*, and ſet before his Eyes, himſelf, or any one in *David*'s Caſe, wrong'd in his Honour, divorc'd from his Nuptial-Bed againſt his Will, deſpoil'd of his Eſtate and Property, wounded in the Diſtreſſes and Afflictions of his Parents, attempted privately to be deſtroy'd, purſued in Publick as an Enemy, and hunted like a Partridge on the Mountains, and forc'd to wander like a Fugitive, and ſeek his Bread out in deſolate Places, and in a manner Excommunicated, by being barr'd the uſe and exerciſe of his Religion. Let any Man, I ſay, but put himſelf in theſe bad Circumſtances, and find himſelf in a capacity of delivering himſelf from out of them, as *David* was, and think with himſelf what he would do. No,—'tis not that I would adviſe him to,—Let him rather think what *David* here did,—*The Lord forbid, that I ſhould ſtretch forth my hand againſt the Lord's anointed.*

There's hardly any one of all theſe ſingle Paſſages that happens to our ſelves, or our Acquaintance, but puts us to extremity, and provokes us beyond all Patience, we call it an intollerable Oppreſſion, and weary Heaven and Earth with our Complaints, and think our ſelves undone, till we have found our Satisfaction or Revenge. How reſtleſs are we in contriving Snares, how quick in catching Opportunities, and how malicious in improving them to our ill-natur'd purpoſes! Much otherwiſe was it with Righteous *David* here, who call'd not to his Mind his paſt Wrongs, nor caſt his Dangers and Oppreſſions up, to make a terrible Account; who

conſulted not with Fleſh and Blood, nor debated the Matter with thoſe ill Adviſers within, his Choler and Revenge, who cure one Evil by a hundred worſe: Yet He, as he had moſt Reaſon, ſo had he moſt Opportunities, and moſt Advantages, to carve out whatever Satisfaction he might judge ſufficient: Which is what for his Honour, and our Inſtruction I muſt *Secondly* inſiſt on.

He was, *firſt*, the King's Son-in-law, one of the greateſt Honours in the Kingdom, and an Advancement that muſt needs draw after it, a great many Friends and Favourites, and make him ſtrong Alliances at Court; and tho' thoſe Friendſhips commonly live but like Flies, while the benign and quickening Influences of the Sun continue, and dye upon the Frowns and Lowrings of their Prince; yet 'twere too hard a reflection on the lightneſs of thoſe places, to think ſuch ſolid Vertue, and unqueſtion'd Merit, as eminently ſhone in *David*, had not acquir'd him a conſiderable Party, and a well-grounded Intereſt at Court.

But, *Secondly*, he was a mighty Man of Valour, he fought *the Lord's Battels*; he was the Sword and Shield, the Horſemen and the Chariots of *Iſrael*. He was the Scourge of the *Philiſtines*, and indeed of all the Idolatrous Nations round; the great Defender of the *Jewiſh* Faith, and the Supporter of God's Worſhip. And 'tis hard to think a Man thus qualified, ſhould fail of bearing ſway amongſt the Soldiery, and being gracious in the Camp; and all Men know, how far that tends to the promoting and ſecuring any great Deſigns.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, This *David* was belov'd of all the People, the Favourite of his Country, the very Idol of the Crowd. His Youth, his Beauty, his attractive Grace, and popular Deportment, together with his Virtue and his Valour, had ſtol'n the Peoples Hearts, and charm'd them ſo to Love and Admiration, that he became the Theme of their perpetual Talk, their Songs and Dances were compos'd in honour of his great Atchievments, and all their Inſtruments of Joy and Muſick, were tun'd to his invidious Praiſes. How harſh and rude muſt thoſe Expreſſions of their Pleaſure be, how unmannerly and ill-natur'd a Triumph, to have the Women come to meet the King himſelf, and grate him with the burthen of their Song, Saul *hath ſlain his thouſands*, *and* David *his ten thouſands*. I do not wonder much, when I conſider humane Nature, that *Saul*, (as it follows in the next Verſe) *was very wroth*, *and the ſaying diſpleaſed him*; and then upon a repetition of that Sentence, 'twas very natural to inferr, *What can he have more but the Kingdom?* 'Tis fatal to a Prince to loſe himſelf, or ſuffer any elſe to get the Affections of his People. A King may be as wroth as *Ahaſuerus* was, and may decree terrible things, and Prieſts may preach up Patience and Obedience long enough; but 'twill not do, unleſs the Affections of the Subject go along therewith. He that hath never gotten theſe, or loſt them once, may find to his coſt, when e'er he comes to try, that the ties of Duty are not half ſo ſtrong as the bands of Love; nor the Service of the Body comparable to the Affections of the Mind. Whereas he that hath gain'd the Heart, will certainly be Maſter of the Hand and

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Service on Occaſion. And this was it that *Saul* foreſaw and dreaded ſo; and this was it that *David* was already in poſſeſſion of. But notwithſtanding all this, great as he was in Court, great as he was in Camp, and greater yet in favour of the People, he would not venture on the impious Fact, ſtill it was, *The Lord forbid that I ſhould ſtretch forth my hand againſt the Lord's anointed.*

The Lord forbid;--yet *David* knew it was this very Lord, that had rejected *Saul* from being King, that rent the Kingdom from him, and that repented he had ever made him King at all. Nay, *David* knew himſelf the Man deſign'd by God to be his Succeſſor, and had accordingly been anointed King by *Samuel*, at the Town of *Bethlehem*.

'Tis ſurely with Ambition, as with other Paſſions, the fantaſtick and imaginary Joys are greater than the experienc'd and ſubſtantial ones: The Hopes and Expectations far exceed the pleaſures of Poſſeſſion. Whatever Cares belong to Crowns, they lye conceal'd within their Circles, and are more ſeldom ſeen than felt; and therefore more engage in their purſuits, than are contented when they get them. But this Temptation found no place with *David*, young, and gay, and vigorous as he was, and even ſo near the Crown, that by conniving at *Abiſhai*'s Blow, he might have been in full and ſure poſſeſſion of it; yet he ſuffered not himſelf to be tranſported beyond the Bounds of rigid Honeſty and Loyalty; and ſtill cries out, *The Lord forbid.*—

Now, to conclude, and to compleat this Character, add, *Laſtly*, to theſe great Advantages, of being Son-in-law, a mighty Man of Valour, and ac-

accepted in the ſight of all the People, of knowing *Saul* rejected, and himſelf deſign'd for Succeſſor, the greateſt yet of all Advantages, and that is *Opportunity*; that without which all others ſignifie but little; and that with which alone Men ſerve their turns, and make up the defects of all the reſt; that Pandar to all Sin, and fatal Snare of Virtue! That that has ruin'd many thouſand Souls, and betray'd them into moſt deteſtable Commiſſions; ſometimes againſt the beſt Convictions of their Underſtanding; nay, and ſometimes againſt their Vows and Reſolutions; Opportunity, that few have Virtue, few have Strength ſufficient to withſtand! and of all Opportunities, none are ſo ſtrong, and work ſo powerfully upon the Minds of Men, as thoſe that look like *Providential* ones, and ſeem to come from God. Yet this was *David's* Opportunity, and yet withſtood. Behold, ſaid the Men of *David* to him, Chap. 24. and ver. 4. *Behold the day, of which the Lord ſaid unto thee, Behold I will deliver thine Enemy into thine hand, that thou may'ſt do unto him as ſhall ſeem good unto thee.* And again, in the Chap. of the Text, and ver. 8. *Then ſaid* Abiſhai *to* David, *God hath delivered thine Enemy into thine hand this day; now therefore let me ſmite him, I pray, with the Spear unto the Earth, at once, and I will not ſmite him the ſecond time.* As if he had ſaid, "Look round "you, noble Youth, and ſee how Heaven and "Earth conſpire in your Advancement; mark how "the Providence of God hath ordered every thing "in your behalf, contriving every Circumſtance to "concurr in ſetting the Crown upon your Head. "How many Pſalms have you compos'd, how ma-

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" ny Vows, how many earneſt Prayers have you
" put up, that God would viſit your Afflictions,
" confound your Enemies, and redeem you from
" Diſtreſs? Behold then, in this Opportunity, your
" Prayers are anſwer'd, and your Vows returned.
" This is the Day, this is the Time, of which the
" Lord ſaid, *I will deliver thine Enemy into thy hand.*
" Is it not he, and he alone, hath wrought this
" great Salvation for thee? with his own Right-hand,
" and with his holy Arm, hath he beſtow'd on thee
" this Victory; what could our few and feeble
" Troops have done againſt a Royal Army, had not
" the Finger of God been viſible in all this Action?
" Had not his gracious Providence diſpos'd of all
" Events in favour of your Claim? *It is the Lord's*
" *doing, and marvellous in all our Eyes*; improve it
" therefore to his Honour, and the advancing his
" Deſigns, in ſetting you over his choſen People.
" Will you withſtand the Purpoſes of God, or will
" you not concurr with his good Providence? God
" hath deliver'd *Saul* into your hands, and do not
" tempt the Lord, by ſlighting or neglecting of his
" Times and Seaſons; 'twere Madneſs and Impiety
" to let him 'ſcape: You muſt not think the Lord
" will work out ſuch Deliverances every Day; to
" Day you are a Conqueror and a King, if you
" but pleaſe; to Morrow you may be a Rebel and
" undone, and who ſhall pity you? You ſhall not
" need to imbrue your own Hands in his Blood;
" you ſhall not need to incurr the Odium of Com-
" manding ſuch a thing to any elſe; I'll ſpare your
" Fame, the Guilt of both; permit me only, by my
" ſelf, to be the Miniſter of Providence, the Execu-
" tioner

" tioner of God's Deſigns. This was the ſenſe and purport of *Abiſhai*'s Speech, and carried ſo much force and worldly Reaſon with it, that none but one that had the fear of God continually before his Eyes, could poſſibly withſtand it, or ſay with *David*, *The Lord forbid that I ſhould ſtretch forth my hand againſt the Lord's anointed.*

And now having done what right I could to the particular State and Circumſtances of *Saul* and *David*, King and Subject, and ſhew'd ſuch Provocations on the one hand, and ſuch Temptations and Advantages on the other, as it may be never did before, or never will again hereafter happen

I am to proceed, and conſider, *Secondly*, the Reaſon *David* gave for his refuſal of *Abiſhai*'s, and the Soldiers Proffer, *It is the Lord's anointed.*

By the *Lords anointed* is here meant, the Man that was by God's deſignation and appointment, anointed King or Captain over all the People, which was done by the Ceremony of pouring a Vial of Oyl upon his Head, and kiſſing him: So that *the anointed of the Lord*, ſignifies no more than an ordinary King with us. *David* therefore would not ſtretch forth his Hand againſt *Saul*, becauſe he was *his King:* He would fly from before him, though he was his King, as he did from *Keilah*; and he would gather up 600 Men to guard him from the Violence of (I will not ſay the King, but) his illegal and blood-thirſty Servants that purſued him: But he would not touch the King's *Life*; and becauſe he has expreſs'd no other reaſon, than that he was the *Lord's anointed*, that is, *a King*, we muſt

either conclude, that the Laws of God, or the fundamental Conſtitutions of the Nation had guarded the Perſons of their Kings from any Violence; or elſe that *David* abſtained, out of a principle of Tenderneſs; or from the unreaſonableneſs of the thing it ſelf; or from the Infamy that always waited on that wicked Practice. The *Laws of God*, did certainly ſecure the Lives of Kings as well as other Mens, if it did no more. And it appears, by the very name of *Treaſon*, that the *Civil Conſtitution* had preſerv'd the Royal Perſon ſacred and inviolable; and if we take our Meaſures from the abſolute and arbitrary Sway of all the *Eaſtern* Monarchs, we cannot but conclude the Cuſtoms of *Judæa*, amongſt the reſt, muſt have conciliated a mighty Awe and Reverence to their Princes. — And for the *unreaſonableneſs* of ſuch Attempts, it is plain, that a Government can't poſſibly ſubſiſt for any time, where any kind of Violence is allowed againſt the Magiſtrate. We ſee what wicked work is made in ſome unhappy States, where private Executions of Revenge, betwixt Particulars, are indulg'd, or frequently conniv'd at. But Government is at an end, where *Rulers* are expos'd to popular Aſſaults, or private Aſſaſſinations. Beſides, there is a great indecency in the nature of the thing, to ſee the Lord and Maſter of a Nation reduc'd to wretched Villany; to ſee the Man, whom all the Kingdom honour'd and ador'd, deſpis'd and trampl'd on; but moſt of all, to find a Sovereign Arbiter and Diſpoſer of his Subjects Lives, to be deſpoil'd of his own: But, *Laſtly*, 'tis, and has always been, and always will, I hope, be infamous, to ſhed their Blood.

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Altho' Mankind has generally a reliſh of Liberty, and has for every Age receiv'd the mention of its brave Aſſerters, with Reverence and Eſteem; yet, I know not how, where-ever it has been vindicated by the Blood of Kings, (tho' they were truly very bad) it gives ſome kind of Shock to human Nature, and blemiſhes the glory of the Action.

Never, perhaps, was any Man more fitted for the vindicating the ancient Liberties of *Rome*, than *M. Brutus* was, a Sober, Vertuous, Honeſt, and Diſintereſted Man, freed from all imputation of Revenge or Malice, by his Enemies, and one that had no other proſpect in the World, than the redeeming of his Country from its Slavery; and yet, becauſe he could not compaſs his Intent, but by the death of its brave Raviſher, his Vertues and moſt noble Qualities have all been loſt under the Infamy of *Parricide* and *Traytor*; ſo natural an abhorrence have all Men for ſhedding of Princes Blood, and taking away their Lives.

But what then, is the World provided for no better than ſo? Hath God indeed ſubjected all Mankind to the tyrannick, impotent, and arbitrary Sway of ſome few Men, who have ſometimes leſs Wiſdom, and frequently leſs Vertue than their Neighbours? it fares but ill, it ſeems, with us, when our Eſtates and Properties, our Lives and Perſons, Wives and Daughters, our Liberties and our Religion too, are put into the hands of ſome weak, wicked, or perverſe, yet uncontrollable Humour; will not this Impunity breed greater Licentiouſneſs in Princes, and augment the ſlavery of the Subjects to ſuch degree, as it can go no lower; and ſo the ſacredneſs of one Man

ſhall be the ruine of many Thouſands? In anſwer to this, we muſt acknowledge, that according to Nature and good Reaſon, there ſeems to be a great deal of Iniquity and Partiality in theſe Caſes; but we muſt ſay withal, that Religion is neither chargeable with theſe Hardſhips, nor anſwerable for them; God hath declar'd himſelf in favour of no one ſort of Government, with reſpect to all the World, nor laid it, by Command on all People: Our Saviour ſaid, *His Kingdom was not of this World*, and did indeed concern himſelf with nothing of it. St. *Peter* and St. *Paul* did preſs Obedience and Subjection on the Chriſtians, as they found occaſion; but then it was Obedience and Subjection to the Laws and different Conſtitutions of the different Governments they liv'd under, and did not thereby change, or think of changing them.

There were, no queſtion, in the Apoſtles Days, very different Forms of Government in the World, ſome Abſolute, and ſome Limited, ſome made their Will the Law, and others govern'd according to known and ſettled Laws; ſome ſucceeded by way of Inheritance, and others were elected to the Rule: Now, if when St. *Peter* and St. *Paul* preſs the Chriſtians they wrote to, to Submiſſion and Obedience, they only mean, that thoſe *particular* Chriſtians ſhould obey the parcular Governments they liv'd under; then there ariſes no Obligation to any other Chriſtians to obey their Governours, by Virtue of any thing ſaid by theſe Apoſtles. But if *all* Chriſtians are hereby underſtood to be exhorted to Obedience to their Governours (as moſt undoubtedly they are) then are all Chriſtians exhorted to pay ſuch Obedience to their Governours, as the particular Conſtitution

of

of the Government they liv'd under call'd for and requir'd. And then the Chriſtians who liv'd under an abſolute Monarch were to pay ſuch Obedience as that Government requir'd; and the Chriſtians who liv'd under a limited and mixed Monarchy, were to obey as that Government requir'd; and ſo of all the reſt, they were all to ſubmit themſelves to the ſeveral Governments they liv'd under; for 'tis not to be preſum'd, that St. *Peter* and St. *Paul* by their preſſing and commanding Chriſtians to ſubmit to and obey their Governours, chang'd the ſeveral Forms and Conſtitutions of Government, and requir'd the Chriſtians of a limited and mixed Monarchy, to obey their Superiors, in the ſame manner, meaſure, and degree, as thoſe of an *Abſolute* one did theirs; but Chriſtianity requir'd ſuch Obedience as the Laws and Cuſtoms of the Country call'd for, and exacted at their hands: And truly, it would be ſtrange to imagine, that Chriſtianity ſhould preſs Men to obey, in Inſtances where the Laws of the Country require no Obedience, ſince every Country is preſum'd to underſtand, and conſult its own Intereſt beſt, and to ſecure ſuch Obedience from the Subjects, as would beſt procure and continue ſuch their Intereſt. And therefore if one Country had liked and approved of ſuch a Form and Conſtitution of Government, and found it beſt and fitteſt for it, with reſpect to its Situation, and its Neighbourhood, and to the Temper and the Genius of its People and Inhabitants; if it had pitch'd upon ſuch Laws, as it found by Experience moſt convenient for it, if ſuch and ſuch were the Powers and Prerogatives of the Superiours, and ſuch and ſuch the Privileges and Immunities of the Subjects,

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Chriſtianity did not intend to alter this, and ſay, that the Superiors ſhall have more Power and a fuller Authority over the People, and the People ſhall have leſs and fewer Privileges than what are already agreed to on both hands. Neither did it come to ſet the People higher, and the Princes lower than they were. Chriſtianity did not meddle with theſe Matters, nor ſay any thing on either ſide; but coming to ſettle Peace and Quiet, Truth, and Honeſty, Juſtice and Religion, in the Hearts of all Men, and to make the whole World eaſie and happy; it commanded Governours to exerciſe their Power with Juſtice and Uprightneſs, with Clemency and Prudence, and all Subjects to obey with Reverence and Submiſſion, with Patience and Contentedneſs; but it came not to alter Conſtitutions, nor to give either Governours or People more Power and Authority than they had before: For if it had, it had brought a Sword along with it, it had come to ſet the Princes of the World at variance with the People, and the People with their Princes, to prejudice Mens Civil Rights and Liberties, and put them in a worſe Condition, as to this World, than they were in before, by overthrowing ſettled Laws, by undoing Compacts and Agreements, the only Preſervatives of Civil Society. In a word, there would be no end of the Miſchiefs that would enſue upon underſtanding Chriſtianity, to oblige all People of the World alike to Obedience and Submiſſion to their Rulers, without reſpect to the different Laws and Conſtitutions of different Kingdoms and Governments; and it would be a very bad Account and Character of that Religion. Whereas, if Chriſtianity

ſtianity came to urge Obedience to the Laws of every Country (not Barbarous, Obſcene, nor Impious, nor any ways execrable) it came to ſecure that Country in the way and manner it thought the beſt and fitteſt for its Intereſt and Happineſs, and brought a Bleſſing with it, and ſhewed both to Prince and People, what was the Meaſure and the Rule of the ones Power, and of the others Obedience; a thing moſt neceſſary to be known, where the Event is of ſo great Importance, both in this World, and that to come. Since therefore Chriſtianity came not to *make* the Laws that Subjects muſt obey, but to urge the Subjects to obey the Laws *made* by the Legiſlative Power, where-ever that reſides; there is no reaſon why it ſhould be charg'd with any of the Miſchiefs or the Inconveniencies of a Government too abſolute, or too much limited: And therefore, (to bring the Matter home) the unlimited extent of Power, placed in the Princes hands, or the ſacredneſs of his Perſon, or his being unaccountable to any one for his Proceedings; are things that depend entirely on the Civil-Conſtitution, and we muſt know them from the Laws, and the continued Uſages and Cuſtoms of the Country, immemorial, or agreed upon.

No doubt but Kings may take up Crowns on pittiful and wretched Terms, as well as Subjects willingly ſubmit their Liberties to the Will of Princes; and each of them muſt ſtand to the Conditions, tho' very inconvenient ones, till they can honeſtly obtain better. I know no better, and no other certain Rule, for all the World to conſider, than this, *Look to the Conſtitution, look to the Laws and Cuſtoms*

of

of a Country, if you would know the Prince's Power or Peoples Privilege. It is not to the Men of great Reaſon, and much Reading, the fineſt Speculators and Eſſayers, one ſhould be refer'd to, upon theſe Occaſions, but to the Hiſtories and Records, the Laws and Statutes, Cuſtoms and Uſages, that are accepted in a Nation; and therefore, where, by theſe, we find the Lives and Liberties of Princes are held Sacred and Inviolable; 'tis to no purpoſe to object the Inconveniencies, both real and imaginary, that may ariſe from ſuch Impunity. *Look to the Laws and Conſtitution.* I ſee, in ſuch a Caſe, no way is left, but to ſay with *David*, in the Text, —*The Lord ſhall ſmite him, or his day ſhall come to dye, or he ſhall periſh in the Battel, but God forbid, that I ſhould ſtretch forth my hand againſt the Lords anointed.*

The Lord ſhall ſmite him, or his day ſhall come, or he ſhall periſh in the Battel, that is, I leave him to God's diſpoſal; let God, the Judge of all the Earth, do with him as he pleaſes. And tho' we think the leaving wicked Kings to God, is the lighteſt and the kindeſt Expreſſion of nothing in the World that can be; yet we would quickly alter our Opinions, and be of *David*'s Mind, if we would give our ſelves leave to conſider,

Firſt, That he hates Injuſtice more.
Secondly, That he is much more *ready*. And,
Thirdly, Much more *able* to puniſh it than we can be.

Firſt,

First, He hates it more: He hates it purely for the malice of its Nature, and its intrinſick Evil. We only for our own, and Intereſts ſake, becauſe we either feel or dread its Miſchiefs. He hates Oppreſſion, Tyranny, and Cruelty, becauſe they are the Contradictions of his own Divine, and the Corruptions of our Humane Nature: They are directly oppoſite to his moſt glorious Attribute of Juſtice, to his moſt gracious ones of Mercy and Compaſſion. He looks with Indignation on thoſe haughty Sons of Violence and Injuſtice, that abuſe the Power that God entruſted them, and the great Titles that he honoured them withal, for the uſe and benefit, to the deſtruction and confuſion of the World, only to ſatisfie their cruel Rage or vain Ambition. There's not a Groan nor Murmur of the poor oppreſs'd, but makes its way to Heaven, and finds acceſſion to the Throne of Grace; He numbers all our Sighs, and counts our Tears, and notes down our Afflictions in his Book, and treaſures them in Wrath, againſt the Day of Wrath. And if we would be ſtrong and patient for a while, and tarry but the Lord's leiſure, we ſhould certainly ſee, he is a God that hates and puniſhes Iniquity.

Secondly, He is much more *willing* to puniſh wicked Governors than we can be. Not that the Goodneſs of God is ſo ready to afflict or grieve the Sons of Men, as they are to deſerve it; or that the human Fury does not ſometimes anticipate the divine Vengeance, but that it is more preſent to his Nature, and more immediately his Will, to puniſh Sin, than it can poſſibly be with us. The love of Ju-

ſtice, and the hate of Sin is ſo eſſentially united to his Being, that one may ſooner fancy no Divinity at all, than that it is not willing *to reward the proud Oppreſſors after their deſervings.*

Men may be brib'd by Paſſions, Intereſt and Affections, ſome from perſuing, others from adminiſtring the Juſtice due to great Offenders. The fears and threatnings of Diſpleaſure, the hopes of Favour and Advancement, the charm of ſoft Words, and the natural pity of Mankind, have oftentimes diverted the moſt Reſolv'd, and laid the fury of the moſt Enrag'd. But God, as he ſees not with Mens Eyes, ſo neither is he mov'd with human Motives; but is inflexible in his Decrees, which are to puniſh great Delinquents with great Wrath; and has declar'd, that nothing but ſincere Repentance can prevent his Judgments.

And, *Laſtly*, He is much more able. He is able to puniſh them in this Life, and in the next: He can puniſh them in this Life, by defeating all their Enterpriſes, and blaſting all their Purpoſes; by infatuating their Counſellors, and turning the Wiſdom of *Achitophel* to Folly and Deſtruction; by ſuffering the Enemy to ſow Diſſentions, Strife, and Diſcord in their Nations; by alienating the Affections of the People; by ſcattering the Spirit of Fear and of Diſtruſt throughout their Armies, and cauſing them to turn their Backs upon their Enemies; and by reducing them themſelves to Miſery and great Diſtreſs; and ſometimes ſuffering them to periſh by the Sword, or ſome more ignominious Death, as well as common Men. But if this be

not

not enough, let them know, that *he is able, after he has deſtroyed the Body, to caſt both Soul and Body into Hell Fire. Tophet*, ſaith *Iſaiah*, the 30th and the 33d, *is prepar'd for the King, he hath made it deep and large; the Pile thereof is Fire, and much Wood; the breath of the Lord, like a ſtream of Brimſtone doth kindle it. Hear therefore, O ye Kings,* (in the 6th of the *Wiſdom of Solomon*) *and underſtand; learn ye that be Judges of the ends of the Earth; give ear you that Rule the People, and glory in the multitude of Nations; for Power is given you of the Lord, and Sovereignty from the Higheſt, who ſhall try your Words, and ſearch out your Counſels; becauſe being Miniſters of his Kingdom, you have not judg'd aright, nor kept the Law, nor walked after the Counſel of God; horribly and ſpeedily ſhall he come upon you; for a ſharp judgment ſhall be to them that be in high places; for Mercy will ſoon pardon the meaneſt, but mighty Men ſhall be mightily tormented.*

And is it not a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God, thus ſharpen'd and prepar'd to execute full Vengeance on ungodly Governors? it is not therefore ſo unreaſonable and trifling a thing, as is commonly reputed, to ſay, that wicked Princes muſt be left to God; it is ſaying, they are left to one that hates them with a perfect Hatred; to one that will and can pour out the Vials of ſuch Wrath upon their Heads, as neither Eye can ſee, nor Tongue expreſs, nor Heart of Man conceive, and that to all Eternity.

And having thus gone through my Text, I ſhould in the *laſt place*, apply my ſelf to the ſad Occaſion of this Days aſſembling; but having been ſo free in handling the firſt Parts, I ſhall ſcarce be allow'd to do right at full to this; and there is, I hope, the leſs occaſion for it, becauſe the ſad Hiſtory is ſo well known, and ſo ſufficiently regreted and deplored by honeſt Men; and the deſign eſpecially of this *Anniverſary*, being more for the Uſe, Inſtruction, and Advantage of the living Subject, than for the Praiſe and Honour of the dead King, the Diſcourſe I have rais'd from the Text, will, if attended to, anſwer the greater and the better end; and there is little need to meddle with the ſecond and the leſs.

That Princes Praiſes ſpeak themſelves aloud; and tho' Misfortunes add great luſtre to Mens Virtues, and ſet them off to great Advantage (as Tears ſhew ſome fair Faces yet more beautiful,) yet *Charles the Firſt* might well have paſt for one of our moſt excellent Kings, altho' he had not had the exerciſe of ſuch Afflictions as he met withal, but had been always Fortunate. But having had the advantage of thoſe Tryals, and thereby practis'd many other Virtues rare and unſeen in Kings, I know not now whom to prefer before him; and God forbid I ſhould be thought to put him under the diſadvantage of repreſenting *Saul* in the Compariſon. He was (and that is as much as I can ſay) no more like *Saul*, than any of his *Murtherers*, was like *David*. If there was ſome Miſgovernment, and ſome unhappy Male-adminiſtration in his Reign (as who can be ſo

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ignorant and partial to deny it) now must, if we will be just to the Truth, discharge his Person, in great measure of it, and lay it where it ought to lye, much of it on some of his indiscreet and zealous Servants, who were unquestionably Men of better Meaning than Abilities, and who appear (at least at so much distance) not to have understood sufficiently the Ground they stood upon, the Times they liv'd in, and the Men they had to deal withal: And somewhat on the Passions of Her, who (tho' she could intend no ill to him, yet) through her fondness for her Party (that contract mischief to this Nation) embroil'd him first with his distemper'd People. But having taken this liberty, I ought to add, that never were Miscarriages improv'd to such a height, nor aggravated with more Malice. Their Adversaries got some Truths, and us'd them, as the Devil does the Scriptures, always perversely, and to bad Purposes; they mingled them with odious Calumnies and Slanders, and treacherous insinuations; and made them help to make the stronger Poyson, and to disperse it more effectually into the Peoples Veins.

As to the Personal Virtues of this Prince, Envy it self hath never yet found any thing to say against them. Sober and Temperate to a wonder, Chaste to his Queen, and faithful to his first Vows; of so pure Innocence, and such unspotted Sanctity in that behalf, that Calumny hath never fixt so much as a Suspicion on his Reputation. And for his Zeal to God, and his Devotion to his Service, his constant Attendance, and good Behaviour in his Prayers,

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his firm Adheſion to the Church, not out of Prejudice or pertinacious Obſtinacy in what he had been educated, but true and ſolid underſtanding of her Conſtitution, with his great Care and Love to all her Miniſters, as they were made his Crimes and Accuſation by his Enemies, ſo by his Friends they have been made an Objection to God's Providence, in ſuffering ſuch a Righteous Prince to fall into the hands of ſuch abominable People; and ſuch an Objection as muſt ſtay (they think) to be ſolv'd by that great Day, when all ſuch Arguments will certainly be fully anſwered, and all ſuch Clamours ſilenced, and all the World ſhall ſee and feel that God is Juſt, and no Unrighteouſneſs dwells with him.

And yet we cannot ſtrictly ſay, this Days Offence hath hitherto been unaccounted for, and unavenged. No Man (I think) can aſſign any one Head, to which we may ſo properly aſcribe the continual Troubles and Alarms that have for many Years diſturb'd this Nation, the vaſt Calamities and moſt amazing Diſtreſſes it has labour'd under, as to the atrocious and moſt execrable Action of this Day, and its moſt curſed Conſequences, the debauching both the Morals and Religion of our Princes and great Men. Had not our Sins increas'd with our Afflictions, I ſhould have hoped, this Days Offence had now been fully expiated, by that long train of Miſchiefs that has followed by way of *Conſequence*, if not *Retaliation*. But if there yet remain any dregs of Wrath for us to drink, I know of nothing that can poſſibly prevent

vent them, or ſupport us under them, but true ſincere Repentance, which through the Merits of the Blood of Chriſt, will waſh away all paſt Offences, reconcile us again to God, and fit us for what future Favours we ſhall want, either as private People, or a Nation, and he in his abundant Wiſdom and Goodneſs ſhall ſee expedient for us.

F I N I S.

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A Sermon Preach'd at *Guild-Hall* Chappel, *Decemb.* 11. 1692. before the Right Honourable the Lord Mayor and Court of Aldermen.

A Sermon Preach'd before the Queen at *White-Hall*, *Feb.* 12. 169$\frac{3}{4}$.

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